



CITY OF NEWPORT
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CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
September 15, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Elliott called the City Council Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. on September 15, 2022.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Present (5): Mayor Laurie Elliott, Council Member Kevin Chapdelaine, Council Member Tom Ingemann, Council Member Marvin Taylor, and Council Member Rozlyn Johnson.

Not Present (0): None.

4. ADOPT AGENDA

Member Chapdelaine motioned to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Member Ingemann. Approved 5-0.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dan Lund, residing at 1125 2nd Avenue, addressed the Council. Mr. Lund stated he wanted to comment on the budget and levy process. Mr. Lund stated he sent an email requesting updated numbers for the tax impact and was impressed that staff pulled those together in time for this meeting. Mr. Lund stated we had an outstanding year with new development. Unfortunately, due to the transfer of property values from commercial into housing, and the loss of the homestead credits, a flat levy is still going to cause a net increase for taxes for the average homeowner. Mr. Lund stated this is not the fault of the City Council or any staff and suggests that we invest what we can afford and try not to do everything at once. He feels the Council is doing an outstanding job and appreciates the staff's effort.

6. ADOPT CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes-** August 18, 2022 Regular Meeting
- B. Minutes-** August 18, 2022 Council Workshop
- C. Minutes-** August 31, 2022 Special Council
- D. Minutes-** September 1, 2022 Special Council
- E. Minutes-** September 1, 2022 Regular Meeting
- F. Resolution No 2022-37-** Bow Hunting
- G. List of Bills-** \$280,785.96
- H. Financial Report-** August 2022

Member Ingemann motioned to adopt the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Member Johnson. Approved 5-0.

7. WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE REPORT

Washington County Sheriff's Deputy Sergeant Bill Harrell – no formal report.

8. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

Fire Chief Steve Wiley stated earlier this week Mayor Elliott inquired about their fire statistics, so he brought a high-level recap of their August calls. Chief Wiley stated they had twenty-three calls in August and of those, six were medical, and seventeen were fire related calls. They had two structure fires: one in St. Paul Park and one in Cottage Grove. Of the six medical calls, four were full arrests (not breathing / no pulse). They responded to five motor vehicle accidents, and the rest of the calls were electrical hazards, alarms, cooking fire, etc. Mayor Elliott thanked Chief Wiley and stated that report was helpful to Council and members of the public. Member Ingemann inquired about the number of calls since the first of the year. Chief Wiley stated they have taken approximately 140 calls. They typically manage two hundred calls each year and their numbers keep increasing. Chief Wiley stated last year they had twenty-four structure fires.

Chief Wiley reported they had a structure fire at 1650 10th Avenue, in the center building of the Newport Ponds complex. The call came in at 4:30 a.m. and the first and second engines were both Newport engines. They were able to get in and do search and rescue along with fire attack at the same time. Chief Wiley thanked the deputies and stated they did excellent job evacuating the building. The deputies got pushed back with the heavy smoke up on the third floor where they heard people screaming. Fire rescued four adults and one infant from the third floor of the apartment complex. Once they were given the all-clear, Firefighters escorted residents back into their apartments to grab a few essentials they needed. St. Paul Park, Cottage Grove, and Woodbury all assisted in this call. Chief Wiley stated they could not have done it without the mutual aid help from the other cities and appreciates their relationships. Chief Wiley stated he is extremely proud of the work the guys did. They kept the fire contained to the second-floor unit. There was heavy damage above and below, but the rest of the building was untouched by fire. In talking with the building inspector, those three apartments are condemned. The building inspector is meeting with Lion Rock Management tomorrow to go through the rest of the building checking smoke detectors, emergency lighting, the smell in the hallways, and ensure the doors are secured since rescue had to breach about half the units during the rescue operation. Mayor Elliott inquired if the other units pass inspection will those residents be able to move back in. Chief Wiley stated it is up to the building inspector. Mayor Elliott expressed her gratitude for our volunteer firefighters and law enforcement for their quick response and no loss of life.

9. ENGINEER'S REPORT

City Engineer Jon Herdegen – no formal report.

10. SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

A. Pay Request- H&U

Superintendent of Public Works Matt Yokiell stated they are busy going through punch list items, updating/changing locks, and waiting on back-ordered items for the new City Hall Building. They are also training on the new HVAC and boilers to learn the technical side. The cleaning crew will start cleaning the new building on Tuesday.

Superintendent Yokiell stated H+U submitted pay request No. 20 in the amount of \$96,439.99 for labor and materials. Mayor Elliott inquired what we have left to pay. Superintendent Yokiell stated he believes we are 96% complete.

Member Ingemann motioned to approve Pay Request No. 20 in the amount of \$96,439.99 to H+U. Seconded by Member Chapdelaine. Approved 5-0.

Superintendent Yokiell informed Council they are working on window restoration at the library.

Superintendent Yokiell stated the contractors for the Pioneer Park playground are planning to work through this weekend to try and complete the new playground by next Thursday.

11. ADMINISTRATION REPORT

A. Non-Residential Connection Fees

Assistant to the City Administrator Travis Brierley stated we discussed reducing the non-residential connection fee for water and sewer at the last workshop. Staff researched the non-residential connection fee of \$13,500 and recommends we change it to be \$5,000 per service for new service lines and \$1,500 per service for lines that have been replaced. Mayor Elliott inquired if \$5,000 is enough to cover a non-stubbed property. Superintendent Yokiell stated the resident would be responsible for the entire cost out to the main. Mayor Elliott stated if we update the fee schedule, we need to make it clear that it would be \$5,000 for sewer and \$5,000 for water.

Member Ingemann motioned to change the fee schedule for non-residential connection fees to \$5,000 per service on new service lines and \$1,500 per service for lines that have been replaced. Seconded by Member Johnson. Approved 5-0.

B. Fire Department Pay

Assistant Brierley stated Chief Wiley gave Council a presentation on Fire Department pay at a previous workshop. The consensus was to start a firefighter's pay at Grade 1, Step 1, which is currently \$17.18, on the City's pay scale. Each promotable fire department rank would be paid an additional dollar per hour. This change would take place on October 1st and should help standardize raises moving forward. Mayor Elliott stated during that workshop we discussed data from surrounding communities. We are having recruitment and retention issues and were behind where we should have been.

Member Ingemann motioned to approve the change to Fire Department pay starting on October 1, 2022. Seconded by Member Johnson. Approved 4-0-1 (Taylor).

C. 2023 Preliminary Budget

1. Resolution No 2022-36- Preliminary Budget

Assistant Brierley stated the memo in the packet has been updated from a previous memo as the tax impact data that was presented was inaccurate. The median value home increased by 21.4%, shifting a greater burden of the levy onto residential home properties. In addition, homestead exclusions were adjusted for 2023, which increased the taxable market value of residential properties. Before finalizing the budget, we need to look into future planning of parks, building improvements, and equipment upgrades. Many of the budget increases can be attributed to increased operational costs, staff, fire, and law enforcement increases, met council charges, and a drop in local government aid. There are still a few items estimated on the budget which include health insurance and CIP fund transfers from the general and NEDA budget. Staff proposed a preliminary levy of 3,706,781 which translates to a tax increase by the city of approximately \$191.81 for an average home valued at \$250,000.

Mayor Elliott stated we need to certify a preliminary levy and set a budget hearing date by September 30th. The final levy and budget would be adopted on December 15th. When discussing the budget, Council should ensure we can maintain existing services, programs, and infrastructure. Second, that we can meet our existing debt obligations. Third, to support capital replacement and repairs. Lastly, to make sure we are doing a respectable job of being effective with the tax dollars. Council discussed and agreed we should follow staff's recommendation for setting the preliminary levy of \$3,706,781.

Member Chapdelaine motioned to adopt Resolution No. 2022-36 – Establishing a preliminary city tax levy of \$3,706,781 for collection in 2023 and to set the tax hearing for December 1, 2022. Seconded by Member Johnson. Approved 5-0.

Mayor Elliott re-emphasized this is a preliminary budget. This number is capped, so we cannot go higher than this number, but we can go lower.

12. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Elliott stated the League of Women Voters candidate forum will be on Wednesday, September 21st at 7:00 p.m. This will be Senate District 53 and House District 53B, which are the new districts that will be representing Newport. At 8:15 p.m. that same evening will be the Newport City Council forum. We have four people running for Newport City Council: Council Member Tom Ingemann, Former Council Member Bill Sumner, Planning Commissioner Tony Mahmood, and a newcomer Zachary Murphy. The forum will be on Comcast channel 18 or channel 859. Residents can also live stream the forum on the South Washington Telecommunications website at swctc.org. Residents can submit questions for candidates to the League of Women Voters at lwvnmn.org. Absentee voting will begin on September 23rd.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Member Chapdelaine motioned to adjourn the City Council Meeting. Seconded by Member Ingemann. Approved 5-0.

The City Council Meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m. on September 15, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted:
Jill Thiesfeld,
Administrative Assistant II

Signed: _____
Laurie Elliott, Mayor